



FEMA

HURRICANES KATRINA and RITA FACT SHEET

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS SECTION 403 SHELTERING

SUPPLEMENT No. 1

Introduction: This fact sheet provides answers to supplemental questions pertaining to the provision of interim housing for evacuees from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita through the Public Assistance (PA) program, which is funded under the authority of Section 403 of the Stafford Act. Eligible applicants for reimbursement of costs for emergency sheltering under this program include state and local governments. It is not intended to address questions relating to the Individuals and Households Program (IHP) which is funded under the authority of Section 408 of the Stafford Act and provides assistance to individuals. Question numbering is continued from the original Fact Sheet dated September 29, 2005.

A. Grant Assistance – Administrative

- (14) **In the answer to Question #A7 in the FEMA Fact Sheet – Frequently Asked Questions, Section 403 Sheltering, what is meant by "penalties"?**

Penalties refer to the costs associated with terminating a lease early, damage repairs and evictions.

- (15) **If a municipality co-signs a lease along with an evacuee, is that acceptable under the current PA policy regarding leases?**

Yes. However, we will reimburse the applicant, not the evacuee, for the lease payment.

- (16) **Can an eligible Applicant contract with a non-governmental agency to handle all aspects of the interim housing operation and be reimbursed for the cost?**

Yes. An applicant may contract with a non-governmental agency to manage the interim housing program, which are the mass shelters, hotels/motels and apartments. The applicant must follow state, local and federal procurement procedures. However, the costs of casework related to an evacuee's personal circumstances outside of the mass shelter are not eligible.



FEMA

HURRICANES KATRINA and RITA FACT SHEET

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS SECTION 403 SHELTERING

SUPPLEMENT No. 1

- (17) **Some states are planning to assign another state agency to manage the overall interim housing operation, essentially serving as the Grantee. As the Grantee we can pay regular time labor in a Cat Z PW. How do we distinguish between Grantee functions and eligible applicant functions?**

Under no circumstances can a state agency be reimbursed for regular time labor expended during the performance of eligible work addressed in a Category B PW, i.e. managing an interim sheltering program for the state. However, as a Grantee, regular time for managing the PA grant would be covered under a Category Z PW. It is the Grantee's responsibility to document what force account regular time was expended while managing to grant vs. while performing CAT B work; i.e. managing an interim shelter program.

- (18) **Is there a maximum limit on rent for a rental unit being used for interim shelter that is higher than the Fair Market Rent (FMR) for that community? How should these requests for approval in these situations be submitted to the region?**

There is no maximum limit, per se. However, the applicant should obtain approval from FEMA prior to entering leases for more than the FMR. Documentation supporting that the FMR is not sufficient for the specific situation should be submitted with a request for approval through the Applicant's Public Assistance Coordinator (PAC). The PAC will forward the request to the Public Assistance Officer (PAO) who will handle getting the necessary approval.

- (19) **What is the hotel/motel rate for interim housing based on? Is it the federal government rate for that city? If yes and the rate is higher than the government rate, is there a maximum limit the region cannot exceed when approving?**

There is no set rate to determine the eligible cost of hotel/motel rooms. The cost must be reasonable, and the region may use the federal government rate as a guideline to determine if the rate is reasonable. However, it should not be used as a basis to determine that the cost of a hotel/motel room is ineligible. There is no established maximum limit.



FEMA

HURRICANES KATRINA and RITA FACT SHEET

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS SECTION 403 SHELTERING

SUPPLEMENT No. 1

- (20) **Can faith-based organizations, not tasked or contracted by the state, be recognized as an eligible applicant and reimbursed for transportation costs incurred due to evacuating families?**

No.

- (21) **How will FEMA notify host states/case management agencies of transportation provided to an evacuee family through the "Facilitated Relocation Program"? This will be necessary in order to avoid duplication of transportation costs and to provide information as to the status of the evacuee family's housing plan. Please provide the confirmed date the Facilitated Relocation Program will be implemented.**

We ask applicants that provided transportation to evacuees prior to October 15, 2005, to provide that information to FEMA for inclusion into our NEMIS database where travel information from the Facilitate Relocation Program is stored. The Facilitated Relocation Program became operational in a limited manner on September 30, 2005. We did not publicize it widely because we wanted to allow time to fully staff the operation. It is now operational. After this date, we encourage all evacuees to make travel arrangements through the Facilitated Relocation Program by calling 1-800-621-FEMA.

- (22) **How does the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) program compliment the FEMA Public Assistance Section 403 Sheltering program?**

HUD provides interim housing to evacuees who lived in public housing or were homeless prior to the disaster.

- (23) **What is the impact of HUD's program on the Section 403 Sheltering program?**

There is no impact. The programs complement each other.



FEMA

HURRICANES KATRINA and RITA FACT SHEET

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS SECTION 403 SHELTERING

SUPPLEMENT No. 1

- (24) How are individuals moved from the interim shelter program phased into the Individuals and Households Program (IHP)?**

Details about how this transition will take place are still under development and will be announced soon.

- (25) How does the Emergency Declaration Sheltering/Interim Housing Program (DSG #2) relate to the "Transitional Housing Assistance" program announced by Secretaries Chertoff and Jackson on September 23, 2005?**

The "Emergency Declaration Sheltering/Interim Housing Program" reimburses local and state governments for providing interim housing to evacuees in mass shelters and hotel and motels. Under the Transitional Housing Assistance Program, FEMA provided evacuees \$2,358 (3 months' rent) to allow them to make their own decisions about their housing needs.

- (26) If 18 months is the maximum amount of housing assistance available to an individual/family group, how will this be coordinated between the PA interim sheltering process and the IA program located in another state?**

We will ask state and local governments to send information about assistance provided under the interim housing program to FEMA. We will record the information in NEMIS.

- (27) Are eligible applicants required to ascertain what, if any, housing costs are covered by the evacuee's homeowner's insurance policy?**

No.



FEMA

HURRICANES KATRINA and RITA FACT SHEET

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS SECTION 403 SHELTERING

SUPPLEMENT No. 1

B. Sheltering Eligibility

- (19) Will PA reimburse eligible applicants for the cost to repair damages, above and beyond normal wear and tear, on rental units being used as interim housing?**

Yes. If the applicant incurred cost to repair damage pursuant to the lease agreement, that cost is eligible for reimbursement.

- (20) Will PA reimburse eligible applicants for costs associated with evictions from interim shelters?**

Yes.

- (21) Would the costs to upgrade facilities that a County or City intends to lease and provide for interim housing of evacuees be eligible for reimbursement under PA?**

No. Costs to upgrade a rental property are not eligible.

- (22) If a municipality renovates a municipally-owned house to provide to an evacuee family, will those expenses be reimbursed?**

Renovation costs are not eligible. Routine maintenance to prepare a property for occupancy is eligible.

- (23) Can PA reimburse an eligible applicant for housing a large family that lived under one roof prior to the hurricane into more than one rental unit if no large enough housing resource is available?**

Yes, but we encourage applicants to house nuclear families in the same housing unit.



FEMA

HURRICANES KATRINA and RITA FACT SHEET

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS SECTION 403 SHELTERING

SUPPLEMENT No. 1

- (24) An eligible applicant has asked the Salvation Army to provide food at a shelter. Can the Salvation Army be considered as a “contractor” to the City? Can the applicant be reimbursed for the cost of the food provided by the Salvation Army?**

If the Salvation Army has incurred costs for the food and the PA applicant reimburses the Salvation Army for that food, then the costs are eligible for reimbursement through PA. Labor costs associated with providing the food are also eligible, as long as the service is provided by paid employees of the Salvation Army.

- (25) What are "reasonable costs for sheltering pets?" Can these costs be reimbursed for up to 12 months while the evacuee family is in interim sheltering?**

The reasonableness of costs can be evaluated based on the average cost of kennel services in a specific area. An applicant should obtain three quotes from local kennels. The cost of sheltering pets is eligible only while the evacuee is in a congregate shelter or hotel/motel rooms. Once an evacuee is placed in a rental unit, sheltering costs for pets is not eligible.

- (26) What are reasonable costs for food? Is it based on the federal government's meal allowance per day for that city times the number of family members?**

We will reimburse applicants for providing food to evacuees at congregate shelters and hotel/motel rooms that do not have kitchens. We will also reimburse applicants for costs incurred for providing food for up to 14 days after placing evacuees into housing units with kitchens. The 14-day period will allow evacuees to make arrangements for their own food.

The Federal per diem rate for meals can be used as a guide to evaluate reasonableness. If an applicant provides food through a catering service, for example, the applicant should follow its normal procurement procedures.



FEMA

HURRICANES KATRINA and RITA FACT SHEET

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS SECTION 403 SHELTERING

SUPPLEMENT No. 1

- (27) **Are costs for providing evacuees transportation to and from work, medical visits, school, laundry, grocery store, etc. eligible for reimbursement?**

The applicant may provide limited transportation to evacuees at congregate shelters as explained in Disaster Specific Guidance No. 2.

- (28) **The "cost of medication" and "emergency medical care" are two separate provisions. Is emergency medical care eligible or only medication?**

Both. The costs of purchasing medication and providing emergency medical care to evacuees at congregate shelters are eligible for reimbursement.

- (29) **According to Disaster Specific Guidance #2, if an evacuee was undergoing treatment prior to evacuation (say diabetes, dialysis, etc.) and treatment is required to continue to protect health and safety of the individual or residents at large, costs for ensuring availability of treatment will be eligible. Please clarify this point. Does this mean the cost of the treatment is reimbursable?**

The cost of definitive medical care is not eligible. Emergency treatment for patients while at the congregate shelters is eligible. The cost of transporting these evacuees to a medical facility qualified to administer treatment is also eligible.

- (30) **Are any medical costs reimbursable while an evacuee is in interim housing?**

No.

- (31) **The use of the term "transitional housing" is confusing due to the Individual Assistance Program providing three months rent for transitional housing. In question #B13 in the Public Assistance Fact Sheet does the writer mean "interim sheltering?"**

Yes.



FEMA

HURRICANES KATRINA and RITA FACT SHEET

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS SECTION 403 SHELTERING

SUPPLEMENT No. 1

- (32) When does the 12-month period for the interim shelter program begin?**

The 12-month period begins when the lease is signed by an eligible applicant or agent thereof.

- (33) If a state or eligible county rents an apartment for 12 months for interim sheltering, and the evacuee leaves to return home or to permanent housing after 3 months, will the state be reimbursed for the full 12 months?**

The state will be reimburse for the cost incurred for the lease, i.e. the cost of the 12-month lease or the cost for terminating the lease early pursuant to the lease agreement. We encourage state and local governments to enter leases for shorter terms which are renewable for up to one year.

- (34) How many times/how long can an extension be given for interim housing?**

Interim housing is eligible for up to 12 months.

- (35) In some cases school districts receive federal funding based on the number of students enrolled. If evacuee students are enrolled after the amount of funding is established, the school district won't receive funding based on that additional number of students. Is the lost funding eligible?**

Unfortunately, these costs are not eligible.

- (36) In what circumstances are the costs of housing evacuees from Hurricane Rita NOT eligible under the existing Emergency declarations for Hurricane Katrina?**

The cost of providing interim housing to evacuees from Hurricane Rita is eligible.

- (37) Can PA pay for furniture purchased by an eligible applicant for an evacuee that is being provided housing by HUD or the United States Department of Agriculture?**

Yes.



FEMA

HURRICANES KATRINA and RITA FACT SHEET

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS SECTION 403 SHELTERING

SUPPLEMENT No. 1

- (38) If an evacuee is housed in HUD housing and the majority of their rent is paid for by HUD or another source and an eligible applicant pays the remainder, will the eligible applicant be reimbursed for that portion which they are paying?**

We will reimburse applicants for the cost of interim housing they contract for evacuees. If HUD provided the housing to evacuees, we will not reimburse the Public Assistance applicants for covering any of those costs.

- (39) Would a PA applicant be eligible for reimbursement for costs to provide interim housing to an evacuee who was a client of a HUD Section 8 Housing prior to the disaster?**

No. Evacuees who received benefits from HUD prior to the disaster are eligible for those benefits in the host state.

- (40) Do we follow the Other Needs Assistance guidelines as a standard for what is essential/eligible for purchase/rental to furnish the units rented under the Section 403 program for interim housing?**

Yes.

- (41) Are essential items such as cooking and eating utensils, bedding, bathroom supplies, cleaning supplies, etc. eligible for reimbursement as supplies?**

Yes.

- (42) Is rental of furniture eligible for those PA applicants who do not wish to own an excess amount of furniture?**

If the rental of furniture is more cost effective than the purchase of the furniture, the rental costs would be eligible.



FEMA

HURRICANES KATRINA and RITA FACT SHEET

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS SECTION 403 SHELTERING

SUPPLEMENT No. 1

- (43) If a state buys furniture, does it have value at the end of the year that will be deducted out of our grant reimbursement?**

There will be minimal salvage value for the furniture which will not materially affect reimbursement to the applicants.

- (44) Can a nursing home be considered interim housing, and if so, can it be paid for up to a year?**

Yes. Nursing homes in host states are considered interim housing for special needs evacuees if they are part of the state or local government's sheltering plan.

- (45) If the State is going to be the only applicant (or there are a handful of applicants, i.e. counties) and the non-applicant counties and or cities provide shelter for evacuees and claim the costs to the State under agreement, will the regular time be eligible for that entity?**

The straight time for regular state and local governments' regular employees is not eligible.

- (46) Is the cost of an air ambulance reimbursable under the PA program?**

If an eligible applicant contracts with an air ambulance to transport an infirmed evacuee to interim housing or to original home city, the cost is eligible.